

Fact Sheet

State Water Resources Control Board California Environmental Protection Agency

Home Landscaping & Yard Maintenance

How to Prevent Polluted Runoff from Reaching Your Local Waterways

- **Native Plants**

Using California Native Plants

Strongly consider making maximum use of native plants in your landscaping and home gardens. Not only will you save water, which in many areas means a substantial cost savings over time, but you will be supporting native wildlife, and also reducing any current need for pest control.

- **Garden Waste**

Garden Waste

Consider composting yard waste; and using the finished compost as a natural fertilizer for your garden(s), edging strips, and other landscaped areas. Good compost can take only 2-3 months to form, and saves landfill space in most California communities.

- **Minimize Fertilizer & Pesticides Use**

Many native species also retain water in their tissues far into our dry summers here in California. In some areas, native plants act as relative fire suppressors rather than as dry fuel, or fire risk. You can find out more about the benefits of native plant landscaping at the following web sites:

- **Integrated Pest Management**

If you use a gardening service, make sure their environmental practices conform to your wishes. If not, shop for a new service, or suggest your service change their techniques. You can also offer your assistance in this effort. Encourage them to make maximum use of public resources, such as this web site and the links here, which have already been developed and paid for.

- **Avoid Runoff**

Websites for basic guidelines & advantages of using California native plants:

The California Native Plant Society: <http://www.cnps.org>
http://www.smartgardening.com/Native_Plant_Species.htm ,
<http://www.calown.com/projecta.html>
<http://www.growingnative.com/>

Information on how to make compost:

<http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/airwaste/wm/recycle/FACTS/compost.htm>

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Minimize the Use of Fertilizer and Pesticides



Never water directly after applying any fertilizers or pesticides (insecticides or herbicides), and never apply these expensive substances just before a rain. Overall, try to minimize use of fertilizers and pesticides. More is very often not better here, just more expensive, more labor to apply, and quite likely will cause some harm to your own local wildlife and environment. For more information on how to accomplish this, visit the 'Our Water Our World' web site at:

<http://centralsan.org/education/ipm/intro.html>

These Store Partnership displays inform you how to save both your own funds (by buying less), time (by applying less) and your own environmental quality (by reducing polluted runoff). They explain how to limit chemical fertilizer and pesticides need and use, and how to reduce mixing and application time. Also important is how to reduce your own cost. This is largely how to prevent any significant amount of the product you pay for from running off the property and ending up polluting some of your own local waters instead of performing the service you desire on your property.

Integrated Pest Management

Consider also using a full Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach for your area and projects. IPM uses all the above principles and more to reduce your costs and labor substantially over time. Visit the following web sites for more information:

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/selectnewpest.home.html>

(specific home/garden/landscaping typical 'pest' species described here)

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/aboutpmg.html>

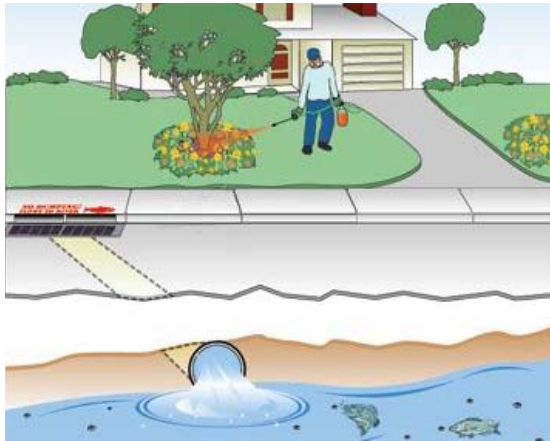
(About pest management & pest identification databases)

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/WATER/U/index.html>

(A people friendly & clearly illustrated polluted runoff or 'nonpoint source' (NPS) water pollution prevention site)

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Surface Runoff Prevention



Avoid overwatering. Visible runoff means you have overwatered already. Some sprinkler systems can be set to water intermittently in 5-15 minute time periods to allow the water applied to soak in instead of running off. Early morning and evening are the best times to water for water conservation, to prevent too much evaporative loss. Also consider using (soil surface) mulches of

cut grass or straw, wood chips, or other natural biodegradable material to limit evaporation loss. Preventing runoff can also retain fertilizers and mulches on your plants. Mulches of several inches of straw, wood chips, or compost can conserve water by preventing evaporation during peak daytime heat hours. Limiting your lawn size can also conserve water and avoid polluting runoff if you do use chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Always remember that storm drains, street gutters, and roadside ditches lead directly to your local creeks, rivers, lakes, and /or the ocean. They do not lead to water treatment plants, only inside drains do.

Questions and Comments:

For more information on the state's Nonpoint Source Program, see our website:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/index.html>